DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 214 248 EA 014 470

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TITLE Moving to an Interorganizational Context for Public School Education: A Case Study.
SPONS AGENCY Mott (C.S.) Foundation, Flint, Mich.; Virginia Univ., Charlottesville, Bureau of Educational Research.
REPORT NO RR-81-107
PUB DATE Mar 82
NOTE 37p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New York, NY, March 19-23, 1982).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Agency Cooperation; Case Studies; City Government; Community Attitudes; Cooperative Programs; *Educational Cooperation; Elementary Secondary Education; Models; *Public Agencies; Recreational Programs; *School Community Programs; School Districts; Social Influences
IDENTIFIERS *Danville City School District VA; Naturalistic Research

ABSTRACT

A case study of interagency cooperation between the Danville (Virginia) public schools and the city's Parks and Recreation Department enabled researchers to examine the characteristics and components of interorganizational relationships in public education. Using naturalistic inquiry techniques, they gathered data through interviews with key actors, observation of programs and activities, analysis of agency documents, and intensive one-day observation of the coordinator of the interagency program. The characteristics of interagency cooperation analyzed included (1) the definition of interagency cooperation; (2) advantages and disadvantages of the relationship; (3) incentives to maintain the relationship, including resource needs and environmental factors; (4) processes, structures, and persons facilitating the relationship; (5) barriers to the relationship, such as "turf" protection and organizational autonomy and size; (6) the agencies' commitment to the relationship; and (7) community reactions to the relationship. From their analysis the researchers construct a model of interagency cooperation comprising three aspects: program parameters, including persons, structures, tasks, technologies, and skills; program processes, such as power, leadership, authority, communication, decision-making, and motivation; and environmental factors, such as history, politics, and social norms and values. (RW)

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MOVING TO AN INTERORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY

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Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York City, March 19-23, 1982.

This research was supported by the C. S. Mott Foundation (R. R. #81-107) and the Bureau of Educational Research, University of Virginia. The interpretations and conclusions contained herein do not necessarily represent those of the Mott Foundation or University Trustees or Officers.

EA 014 470

This paper reports an investigation into the nature of an interagency cooperative relationship between a public school system and a department of parks and recreation. The inquiry was conducted in order to: (1) examine the characteristics and components central to an interorganizational context for public school education; (2) utilize the methodology of naturalistic inquiry as a means of focusing on one site, Danville (VA); and (3) analyze and predict emergent notions of organizational structure, roles, and effectiveness for the public schools as a result of the single-site intervention.

Two major literature and research frameworks formed a conceptual rationale for the study: (1) general knowledge about interagency relationships and notions of resource exchange networks; and (2) specific bases for understanding interagency relationships, including incentives and benefits, facilitators, and barriers. Use of naturalistic inquiry as a research approach, though, necessitated viewing such frameworks as only one of many "realities."

CONCEPTUAL RATIONALE

Defining the nature of interagency relationships and the field of interorganizational structures has been attempted by theorists in differing ways. Homans (1958) focused on the notion of "exchange," as did Levine and White (1961). Other writers prefer the idea of "mutuality," (Shoop, 1976; Cook, 1979), discussing its magnitude on a continuum in terms of cooperation (Aiken, Dewar, DiTomaso, Hage, and Zeitz, 1975; Parson, 1975) at the low end, coordination (Black and Kase, 1963; Litwak and Meyer, 1966; Aiken, et al., 1975; Denton, 1975; Davidson, 1976; Wood, 1980) in the middle, and collaboration (Eyster, 1975) on the high end of mutual benefit. Still other conceptualizers wrote that interagency relationships vary on the degree of formality by which they exist. (Guetzknow, 1966; Marrett, 1971; Sarason and Lorentz, 1979).

A second approach to understanding conceptually, (as a basis for empirical examination) and notion of interorganizational relations center on the explication of specific incentives, benefits, facilitators, and barriers. Incentives and benefits fall under three general categories: need for exchange/ scarcity hypothesis (Levine and White, 1961; Evan, 1966; Adamek and Lavin, 1969; Wood, 1972; Kaplan and Warden, 1978); improved resource utilization (Kaplan, 1975; Eyster, 1975; Ringers, 1977; Cook, 1979); and environmental changes and pressures (Levine and White, 1961; Litwak and Hylton, 1962; Black and Kuse, 1963; Aiken and Hage, 1968; Terreberry, 1968; Hasenfeld and English, 1974; Aiken, et al., 1975; Aldrich, 1975; Eyster, 1975). A number of writers and researchers have tried to identify specific facilitators for interagency coordination. That is, even when conditions are present which provide incentives for coordination, coordination does not necessarily occur. Certain factors within and between organizations have been identified as playing useful roles in the actual facilitation of coordination (Litwak and Hylton, 1962; Reid, 1964; Warren, 1967; Aiken and Hage, 1968; White, Levine and Viasak, 1969; Denton, 1975; Eyster, 1975; Shoop, 1976; Ringers, 1977; Cook, 1979). With a long list of facilitators and incentives and benefits for interagency relations, one might assume that interagency coordination is a rule rather than an exception. It is not, as several writers explicating barriers have discussed. Barriers include organizational autonomy (Hasenfeld and English, 1974; Aiken, et al., 1975; Kaplan and Warden, 1978), turf protection (Denton, 1975; Eyster, 1975; Greiner, 1978), organizational size (Reid, 1964; Aiken and Hage, 1968; Eyster, 1975), and others such as incongruent perceptions between major actors (Litwak and Hylton, 1975), history (Denton, 1975), and time constraints, personalities, and degree of commitment (Eyster, 1975).

METHODOLOGY

The study used a phenomenological approach to inquiry, in which research questions guided the overall work, but the areas being investigated were permitted to become more clearly articulated as the study progressed. That is, the study took on "a life of its own." This "life" always was within the basic framework of the study, understanding the nature of a specific inter-agency relationship in Danville. Whenever questions other than those initially posed arose during the investigation, they were pursued. Thus, the research team took an open-ended approach, pursuing leads, people, documents, and themes which emerged as part of the study.

Naturalistic inquiry (N/I) was selected for use as the methodology because it provided opportunities for the researchers to explore in a systematic fashion the richness, the relationships, and the underlying tensions and glue which caused stress and disruption or which bound the organizations together. To explore relationships between entities as complex as a public school system and a parks and recreation department, an immersion into the day-to-day activities and behaviors of the key actors was necessary. Naturalistic inquiry was seen as the most appropriate method for this kind of exploration.

The use of N/I is relatively new in the field of education, although the approach employs techniques and strategies which have been utilized for decades in such fields as anthropology and sociology. N/I may be understood by contrasting it with the more frequently used experimental method (see Table 1).

Research Questions

1. How is interagency cooperation/collaboration defined by each agency official? in the literature?

2. What do the agencies see as the advantages and disadvantages of the cooperative relationship?

Table 1

Comparison of Experimental and Naturalistic Approaches[1]

	Experimental Approach	Naturalistic Inquiry
Philosophical Differences	Concerned with facts, causes, states of reality which can be measured and compared	Sees reality as subjective, is what people imagine it to be, the concern is with describing and understanding social phenomena
Inquiry Paradigm	Sees world as made up of variables which can be isolated and controlled to see the effects of a change in one area or another	Immerses itself with an open mind, cross checks one's perceptions with others, seeking convergence
Purpose	To test a hypothesis and verify it or not verify it	To discover perceptions of reality
Stance	Takes a reductionist stance, seeking data for a small sample of reality; a focused, singular view	Takes an expansionist view, a holistic view, it is open minded, exploratory
Style	Interviews, manages, manipulates	Selects members of an audience, watches for aspects considered critical in importance
Reality	There is one reality, to be sought and identified	There may be many realities with each having several layers, existing in the minds of individuals, and changing over time
Values	Sees world through one value framework, assumes inquiry to be value-free	Sees values as part of the inquiry which shapes the work, takes a pluralistic view
Setting	Laboratory	Natural environment
Context	Controls for the context, excludes the context in data, or withdraws from it	Includes context, finds it relevant
Methods	Seeks agreement between two or more equally competent observers, to gain an objective appraisal	Seeks confirmability, agreement from a variety of sources

[1]Adapted from Guba, E. Toward a Methodology of Naturalistic Inquiry in Educational Evaluation, 1978.

3. How important to the continuation of the cooperative relationship are program parameters? environmental factors? program processes?

2. What is the extent of each agency's commitment to the cooperative relationship?

5. How have different groups in the community (e.g., clients of the agency, non-clients) reacted to the cooperative relationships?

Key Actors

The study was shaped by the ideas and interests of the key individuals most centrally involved in the two organizations, consistent with the naturalistic inquiry method. There is no singular reality, according to N/I principles; rather there are many realities, and they vary with the people involved and the situations in which those individuals find themselves. Thus, it was important at the outset for us, as researchers, to gain at least an initial feeling for the concerns, interests, and assumptions of key people, and to let those individuals know of our interest in doing so. At this step establishing rapport with the staff members of the two agencies became paramount, too.

Initial meetings with key people took place during a first visit to Danville in September, 1980, and during a two-day follow-up visit the following month. During these meetings, the researchers and several members of the Public Schools' staff dined together and spent time in informal discussions, sharing some ideas and questions about the study. In addition, formal interviews were held with the Superintendent of Schools, Director of Parks and Recreation, Director of Career and Vocational Education, Adult and Continuing Education (to whom the coordinator of Community Education reports), the two Community School Program Supervisors, and the Coordinator of Community Education (CE). The focus of these interviews was on the nature of each person's involvement in the inter-agency relationship, in their respective organizations, and in their interests

in the study's outcomes. Subsequent on-site visits were made to Danville to continue the interaction with key actors in the interagency relationship.

Data Collection Methods and Procedures

Four types of data collection techniques were used:

1. Interviews with individuals and groups
2. Observations of interagency programs, staff meetings, meetings between key staff and others (e.g., professionals, citizens)
3. Document analysis
4. "Shadowing" of key staff through a major part of their day

Interviews

The researchers determined that several categories of people would be interviewed: staff members of each organization, especially those with ongoing involvement with the interagency program; members of governing boards such as the School Board and City Council; individuals who were involved in the early stages of the interagency relationship; and a number of individuals who worked in local social and human service agencies and who had contact with both organizations through the interagency relationship. In all, 22 individuals were interviewed, 7 of them on two or more occasions.

In keeping with the nature of N/I, the types of questions asked, the order in which they were asked, and the amount of follow-up with each interviewee varied according to the information needed and the flow of the interview. For example, interviews conducted with local persons such as the Superintendent of Schools and the Director of Parks and Recreation covered a wide range of topics on the interagency relationship, from history to current support bases and from perceptions and definitions of interagency relationships to specific items on the budget. Individuals with the most contact and knowledge about the interagency program itself were asked more follow-up questions to probe for

the nuances, background, and rationale for decisions, for implications resulting from particular actions, and for feelings between specific individuals and agencies.

The structure of the interview session also varied with the interviewee and type of interview. When talking with a former School Board member, for example, the primary need was to learn more about the origins of the inter-agency relationship. On the other hand, an interview with a staff member who had ongoing involvement over several years with the program covered a broad range of topics and followed its own course.

In order to gain insights and to uncover attitudes or feelings which were not disclosed during the main course of an interview, the interviewer occasionally would probe for information. For example, when one of the key decision makers was discussing, during a second interview, the very positive nature of the interagency relationship, the interviewer noted that some staff had indicated a lack of formality in the relationship, implying that little was written down or articulated as policy concerning the relationship; most of the outcomes depended upon the good will and close working relationships of the key staff involved. This was noted to the interviewee to learn if the interviewee shared this view and if he/she might have had other feelings about this aspect of the relationship. Another approach used by the interviewers focused on offering feedback on a follow-up basis to staff being interviewed. For example, a follow-up interview might involve the interviewer noting that at a previous interview, the interviewee had indicated a given reaction to some topic. This would allow the interviewer to go further into the subject, to learn if there was anything more that the interviewee cared to discuss.

Several staff members were interviewed a second time. Second and subsequent interviews were often more structured. These follow-up interviews focused on

two or three specific areas of questioning: budgets, joint planning and decision making, and gaps apparent from trying to "piece together" the history of the relationship. One outcome of follow-up interviews was an elaboration of information about topics just "mentioned" during the first interview.

All interviews were held in person, with the exception of two follow-up interviews which had to be conducted by telephone because of difficulty in finding mutually agreed-upon to meet and were conducted in the offices of those interviewed. Notes were taken by the researchers during most interviews, although no attempt was made to record responses verbatim. Key phrases, ideas, and themes which came out during the talk were recorded. Interviews lasted from 30 minutes to two and one-half hours; an average length of time was 45 minutes. Those individuals who had very limited contact with the interagency relationship were interviewed for shorter periods of time.

Interview questions asked were developed from several sources. A literature review produced questions, paralleling the general categories found in the literature on interagency relationships--e.g., facilitators, barriers, role of environment, role of key individuals. The research team itself generated questions before each site visit and from a review and critique of information available after each site visit. A third source of questions came from the historical documents reviewed. A list of interview questions typically asked is found in Table 2

Observations

In addition to using interviews for data collection during on-site visits, observations of ongoing program individuals and activities were made. Open gym periods, classes, club meetings using public school space, workshops, parent meetings, and School Board meetings were all viewed. Informal meetings between

Table 2

Typical Interview Questions

General

What is your current involvement in the CE program, or with either the Parks and Recreation Department or Danville Public Schools?

When did you first become involved with CE, or the agency?

How did you become involved with CE or your agency?

How do you define CE? Interagency relationships?

How is the interagency relationship between the Public Schools and the Danville Parks and Recreation Department working today?

What are the costs and benefits of CE and the interagency relationship today in general? For each agency? For the community?

What facilitates the interagency relationship? What problems are encountered? How are the problems being handled?

What would happen if a new Superintendent of Schools came to Danville, in terms of the impact on the CE program and the relationship with the Parks and Recreation Department?

What would happen if a new Director of Parks and Recreation came to Danville?

What are the support bases for CE in Danville? What are the support bases for interagency relationships?

What is the relative influence each agency has over the CE program?

Are different (perceived) amounts of influence of each agency over the program a problem for the relationship?

Historical

Those individuals who had been involved with Danville's CE program from its inception in 1972, or who had extensive involvement with it at some point from 1972-1980, were asked the following questions:

How did CE get started in Danville? Why did it begin here?

Who was involved in initiating the interagency relationship?

What were seen as the incentives for each agency to get involved?

What roadblocks or problems were anticipated? Which ones were found?

How were initial problems handled?

What were the first steps taken to begin the relationship?

What outside people were involved?

What were the reasons an evaluation was done in 1974?

What were the results of that evaluation? Which recommendations were put into effect? To what extent were they helpful?

What role did the first two CE coordinators play? How were the contributions of Hyder and Tomlanovich perceived?

What was the social/racial/economic climate in Danville at the time CE began? During the mid-1970s?

What has the community's reaction been to CE thus far?

key actors were observed, too. Analyzing such interactions were useful in learning more about the flavor of the relationships, types of problems encountered, and ways in which staff of each agency relate to each other. Nine on-site visits to Danville amounting to twenty days were made. Meetings in the community which involved the staff of either organization were observed. These observations helped the researchers gain a first-hand understanding of the coordinating role played by CE and the ways in which other agencies look at CE.

Document Analysis

Staff of Parks and Recreation and the Public Schools supplied the researchers with documents of both an historical and current nature. Documents were sought which were relevant to the history of the interagency relationship, its support bases, ways in which the staff of each organization work together, questionnaires and survey forms, and budget information.

Some areas of interest which arose during the course of study prompted review of other documents. For instance, a large number of interviewees noted how informal and personal the relationship between the two organizations had always been. This response led to a review of formalized policies and procedures worked out by each agency regarding interagency relationships.

Shadowing

Jackie Rochford, as the Director of CE and central person in the interagency relationship, was observed for extended periods of time. This was done to gain information about: the demands of her job; the ways in which the two agencies interface; the problems and positive elements of the interagency relationship; and the overall nature of the program. In at least six instances, one of the researchers spent periods of 3-5 hours in a given day with Jackie as she managed

the various tasks and responsibilities of her job. On another occasion, a member of the research team spent a complete day with her.

Data Anslysis

After each site visit was completed, notes were typed, reviewed, and discussed by the researchers. Themes and patterns began to appear in the data after the second and third visits. As indicated by N/I, such themes were pursued as they emerged. In addition, the researchers were aware of the need to gain verification for their observations. Interviews were arranged with people who had maintained contact with Danville's interagency program over several years, but who were not involved with it on an ongoing, day-to-day basis, to discuss emerging patterns in the interrelationship and to gain additional perspectives. Efforts to verify findings, to check various data sources, and to discuss reactions with "disinterested third parties" were emphasized, determining the extent to which there was convergence and divergence of the data. The researchers paid special attention to the need for following up on divergent leads.

When all key actors had been interviewed at least once, the researchers reviewed all site visit notes, categories from the literature review, and document records. Team members individually went through all of the data, each making a list of the categories which seemed to exist in the data. The separately-compiled lists were then compared and one list was created from them. The categories included in that single list are listed in Table 3. Once these categories were determined, the data were organized accordingly. For instance, the findings which related to the interface of the two organizations (one of the 4 major categories used) were extracted from the original site visit report or document and compiled with other data covering the interface. This "cutting and pasting" activity concluded with a new version of the data.

Table 3

Categories Used to Organize Initial Data

1. History
2. CE Program and Process Elements
3. Interagency Relationships As Means versus Ends
4. CE Staff Roles and Attitudes
5. CE Staff Interaction with Other Agencies
6. Other Examples of Interagency Relationships
7. Involvement and Participation of the Community
8. Parks and Recreation Department Staff Roles and Attitudes
9. Public Schools Organization and Staff
10. Budget, Finances, Fees
11. Working Relationships
12. Visibility of Agencies
13. Specific Points of Interface (and Vignettes)
14. Sites
15. Administrative Council
16. Allegiance to Each Organization
17. Relative Power of Each Organization
18. Support Bases for Interagency Relationship
19. Costs and Benefits of the Interagency Relationship
20. Perceptions of Danville's CE, and the Interagency Relationship

Rather than information being contained in site-visit reports, the data were now organized by category. Several "shuffles" occurred to gain multiple perspectives on the data arrangements. In addition, descriptions of the geographic, historical, political, and demographic characteristics of Danville were compiled.

The research team reviewed this draft of the findings and determined that it was factually accurate, but gaps in the data existed. Two more site visits were made, the primary purpose of which was to spend a full day shadowing Jackie, the Director of CE.

A "second" analysis of data was performed and included a series of comparisons. First, the initial set of data findings was compared with the information brought back from the final two site visits. It was found that the information gaps noted above were dealt with, and that the shadowing of Jackie for a full day had, indeed, added a good deal of information and insight into how she and her position relate to the two organizations and staff. In addition, comparisons were made between findings and categories noted in the literature review and the findings from Danville. Finally, the data were studied by "responding" to the initial set of research questions.

Reporting

Although not included in this paper, findings were reported and discussed in two sections. Information about the City of Danville and its community services were presented first. Data contained therein was made available to the researchers by the Chamber of Commerce and from previous studies of Danville's interagency program. Also contained in this section were data gathered for the study, including staff roles and attitudes, the relative influence of

each organization, and the costs and benefits of the interagency relationship.

A second part of the Findings section includes "A Day in the Life of..." description of the CE Coordinator. The researchers compiled different events, conversations, activities and reactions which had been observed during the previous 9 months, and put them into a composite "day" in the working life of Jackie Rochford. It was felt that, while Jackie might never have a day exactly like the one described, the nature of her "typical" days would be captured by this section. This part also proved useful as a mechanism for describing various aspects of the interagency relationship and the ways in which key people interact.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

An analysis of the findings of a relationship as complex as that existing between a Public School system and Parks and Recreation department must start with a framework; such a structure provides a "lens" by which the data can be understandable and can provide insights into the reality. First, a comparison between the literature on interagency relationships and the findings of the Danville Public Schools and Department of Recreation interagency relationships are presented. Second, results of the triangulation process are examined in light of the findings.

Comparison of Findings with the Literature

Interagency Cooperation Defined

The definitions of interagency cooperation/collaboration given by those people interviewed in Danville parallel the definition of coordination found in the literature. Staff members referred to exchange, to the sharing of resources, to mutual program development, and to the implementation of programs which exceed that which agencies could do by themselves. Their notion of interagency relationship involved more exchange than is commonly found with

the concept of cooperation, but not as much as is usually found with collaboration, which might include the ultimate merger of the separate organizational units or functions over time.

Advantages and Disadvantages of the Relationship

Those in the Public Schools saw CE and the interagency relationship as a means of enhancing their public actions, of gaining increased community support, and of reaching more citizens with programs. The only major costs involved, from their point of view, were some added wear and tear on school facilities and, occasionally, some difficulties encountered when teachers found their rooms cluttered or their equipment used improperly.

Staff of Parks and Recreation saw the advantages of increased facilities use, of reaching more citizens with recreational programs, and of shaping public attitudes toward recreation as major factors in the interagency relationship. They could cite no costs for their agency in terms of reduced agency visibility or reduced autonomy.

Incentives and Benefits

In the literature, three incentives for interagency relationship are identified: (1) an agency's need for exchange of resources to meet its goals (the scarcity hypothesis), (2) the desire to make improved use of existing resources and to avoid duplication of services, and (3) environmental pressures or factors.

Concerning the first incentive, the Department of Parks and Recreation staff clearly perceived itself as lacking sufficient resources to meet its goals and had tried for some time to gain access to the Public Schools' facilities in order to offer its programs. Parks and Recreation staff realized that they could offer both increased services (if they had access to additional recreation facilities) and services in new areas (e.g., senior citizen programs, services

to the handicapped) because of the facilities made available by the Public Schools. To a lesser extent, the Danville Public Schools were influenced by the need to exchange resources and the notion of scarcity. Those Public School staff interviewed replied consistently that increased community support was the major benefit accrued by the Public Schools from the interagency relationship. Several Public School staff also emphasized that the interagency relationship and CE approach enabled the Public Schools to provide more services than could be done without such an arrangement.

The second incentive/benefit mentioned in the literature, improved use of existing resources, was a factor primarily influencing the Public Schools in the interorganizational context. Usage of school facilities has been a benefit of the relationship since the early 1970s in the eyes of some Public School officials, and they point to the increased use of the school facilities because of the interagency relationship. The efficient use of resources was cited as a benefit of the relationship when budget requests are presented to City Council, especially relative to avoiding and reducing the duplication of services.

The third factor, environmental pressures and changes, was also evident in Danville. There was no evidence that actual community pressure was brought to bear on the Public Schools or Parks and Recreation as a major influence on the decision to initiate the relationship. However, the Public Schools' need for community support can be seen as a type of environmental pressure. Given some of the changes which occurred in the early 1980s, such as desegregation and declining enrollments, it is not surprising that Public School officials cite community support as the major benefit accruing from the interagency relationship.

Parks and Recreation staff also saw community support as important; in

terms of the interagency relationship, they looked at it from a different perspective. One benefit reported by the Parks and Recreation staff centered on the increased opportunities to influence community attitudes about recreation through the use of Public School facilities. Use of school facilities has allowed Parks and Recreation to expand its offerings.

Facilitators

Factors which facilitate interagency relationships fall into two categories: (1) process/interpersonal factors and (2) organizational structures and mechanisms. The process and interpersonal issues include the establishment of trust between key organizational staff members, the arrangement of non-threatening situations in which key staff could meet and interact, and the talents and creativity of key individuals. Organizational structure factors include the use of coordinating agencies or individuals, the use of a model for instituting coordinating relationships, and the matching of organizations with complimentary resources.

Staff involved cited the good relationship between the Director of Parks and Recreation and the Superintendent of Schools as an important reason for the start of the interagency relationship and CE. The same staff pointed out that the relationship continues to work largely because of continued good rapport between the new CEOs and between them and the others on the Administrative Council. For instance, Truitt indicated that he did not know exactly how much money Gilstrap was able to budget for CE; Truitt said he assumed that his counterpart would always come up with as much as he could. Such a working relationship is built on a substantial amount of trust. In another vein, during the recent interviewing for a new community school building coordinator, the CE coordinator asked one agency head if he would like to be involved in the interviews. Gilstrap replied that he had confidence that the CE coordinator

would understand his department's interests and would choose someone capable and competent in serving both agencies. In addition to the element of trust, the importance of a single individual with special talents and creativity arises in Danville. The interagency relationship seems to be satisfying both organizations' needs partly because of the talents of several individuals. Several professionals in the Public Schools, Parks and Recreation Department and other community agencies spoke about how the CE coordinator, Jackie, performs her job, being alert and sensitive to the needs and potential conflicts between the two organizations. Her ability to manage this relationship has clearly facilitated it. The characteristics and qualities of the other individuals most involved in the relationship also contributed significantly to smooth coordination. Truitt and Gilstrap not only work well with each other, but also relate easily to others. They set a climate of openness, respect, and cooperation. As was noted above, both Tish, the assistant director of Parks and Recreation, and Jackie reported some ambiguity in their roles and working relationship, particularly regarding Jackie's relationship to Parks and Recreation. Both seem able to function effectively together in spite of this ambiguity. In addition, although Tish has responsibility as Jackie's "boss" within Parks and Recreation, she does not feel like Jackie's supervisor; she makes herself available for assistance and gives feedback and help as needed, without overstepping her role.

The second category of facilitators, organizational structures and mechanisms, is less evident in the interagency relationship under study. The one structural facilitator which is present in Danville involves the notion of complementary resources and similar or differing goals. Those who have looked at interagency relationships from this perspective agree that coordination is facilitated if the organizations involved have complementary resources. This is clearly the

case in Danville: the Public Schools system has the facilities and some programs, while the Parks and Recreation Department has staff and programs, but lack many facilities. As to the issue of similar agency goals, the two organizations have similar goals only in the broadest sense--they both exist to provide services to the public. On a more concrete level, the goals do not coincide. It is not clear whether the dissimilarity of goals has facilitated the relationship. None of the staff involved in the two organizations pointed to goals as a factor. There are other organizations with complementary resources and goals which are similar to Parks and Recreation Department--the YMCA, for one--which have not had extensive interagency coordination with Parks and Recreation. It may be that having dissimilar goals has helped balance the interagency relations between the Public Schools and Parks and Recreation.

Barriers

The barriers to interagency coordination identified in the literature include: (1) organizational autonomy, (2) turf protection, and (3) organizational size. Organizational autonomy encompasses such factors as fear of outsiders and differing professional ideologies and entrenched political processes. None of these has been a significant problem in the Danville interagency experience. This is not to say that there are not differences between the Public Schools and Parks and Recreation concerning such issues as professional ideologies and political processes. There are. The differences have not become barriers, however, because of the incentives and facilitators for the relationship. The relationship satisfies needs of both organizations (scarcity of resources, need to exchange, need for public support), and key individuals facilitate the relationship and manage potential and real conflicts. The end result is that Gilstrap, as the head of Parks and Recreation, may state strongly that he believes a Bachelor's degree is essential for the Community

School Program Supervisors; others on the Administrative Council from the Public Schools may offer alternate opinions, but the difference does not impede progress or implementation. The same is true of the organizations' views of the program supervisors' role. Those in Parks and Recreation wish to see a much broader role taken with more involvement in their department's staff meetings and staff development sessions, and perhaps more involvement in other community service activities than is now the case. The Program Supervisors are following their employer's--the Public Schools--guidelines in this regard, and while such conflicts over appropriate roles could easily cause interagency conflict and stress for the Program Supervisors, such has not been the case.

Turf protection and organizational size similarly have been avoided as barriers to interagency coordination. The attitudes of the key staff involved have contributed to the absence of turf guarding. Some of the staff interviewed noted that the question of turf guarding is one which might arise with Public School personnel, since their facilities are most often involved. Teachers have often voiced concern and objection when they perceive that CE is causing problem for them in their classrooms. However, this has not been viewed as an actual barrier to interagency coordination. Rather, it is seen by CE staff as an ongoing reality which must be acknowledged, understood, and dealt with sensitively.

Organizational size has been reported to be a barrier in some studies. Large organizations with many departments or units often seem able to meet all of their needs and goals independently. In some cases, size is related to prestige, i.e., large agencies may have high prestige, and those in the agency may be hesitant to enter into relationships with less prestigious organizations. Both the Danville Public Schools and Department of Parks and Recreation are

relatively large agencies. The Public Schools' budget is larger than that of Parks and Recreation. One might expect size and the question of prestige to be an issue and possible barrier with these organizations. The fact that the Public Schools contribute more money to the CE program than does Parks and Recreation is an additional factor which could cause problems. However, there is no indication that differences in size, prestige, or amount contributed to CE have created barriers. One reason might be that individual, one-on-one relationships are still maintained. As has been stated, those in decision-making positions have good rapport and know how to work well together. Another possible explanation is that each organization is having its needs met through the relationship and feels neither any threat from the other nor any stigma from being closely associated with the other. From the point of view of the Parks and Recreation staff, the relationship is extremely beneficial; facilities are used at a cost less than that which would have to be spent to rent, buy, or build such facilities. As Gilstrap indicated, "We have the best of both worlds--our facilities as well as theirs." From the point of view of the Public Schools, the CE program offers increased services to its constituency at a low cost and helps build support for the school system. As Truitt sees it, the Public Schools put more money into CE than does Parks and Recreation; the Schools "own 51% of the stock" and see that the program staff operate essentially from the school-system-as-employer perspective. Thus, both agencies seem to be getting what they need for the arrangement, which may explain why any perceived differences in prestige, organization, size, or amount contributed to the interagency relationship do not pose problems.

Agencies' Commitment to the Relationship

Commitment was probed from different perspectives. Those interviewed were asked questions concerning the payoffs and costs of the relationship, which staff know the most about the relationship, who would care in the agency or community if the interagency relationship and CE were to end, and what would happen with a new head of one of the agencies, one who had different views of the need for CE and the interagency relationship. A strong commitment to the relationship is felt by many staff within Parks and Recreation; it is clear to them that Parks and Recreation gains from the relationship. The director's comment, that he could not imagine someone else coming into his position and not liking the setup, indicates how strongly he believes that the relationship is beneficial to his agency. In addition, CE has allowed Parks and Recreation to expand its program offerings and areas and populations served in the city, thus reaching more people. The directors express genuine interest in reaching as many citizens as possible and helping to broaden people's understanding of what recreation is and can be. Involvement with the Public Schools and CE has clearly assisted in this effort and has added to their commitment to maintain the interagency relationship.

Those interviewed within the Public Schools and CE program indicated a sincere interest and belief in the value of serving the citizenry, and for this reason CE and the interagency relationship were seen as valuable. The School Board's support for CE is not as clear. Truitt indicated that he had never heard a School Board member question the value or suggest dropping the program. On the other hand, he said that were he to leave, he was not sure that new applicants for the job would be asked about their support for the CE and interagency concepts. Commitment in the Public Schools towards the relationship depends on the level under investigation. Those most directly

involved in the ongoing administration of the CE program are very committed. Principals, however, show lower levels of commitment.

Community Reaction to the Relationship

Observations of some programs suggest that those who attend are quite pleased with the programs. It is unlikely, however, that participants know that the programs are possible because of an interagency relationship. Rather, participants seem to learn about CE and its programs in the same way they learn about other community activities: word-of-mouth, publicity and advertising in newspapers and other media, and previous contact with one of the programs.

Those who work in community service agencies seem to be supportive of what CE is trying to do, but they probably do not give much thought to the fact that CE is the result of two agencies coming together--"they kind of take it for granted by now," is how the CE director put it. It appears that most information about CE, while it typically mentions the joint (Parks and Recreation and Public Schools) sponsorship of the program, focuses on CE rather than on the interagency aspect. To a large extent this is probably intentional, as the key staff in each organization do not appear concerned that their agency receive a great deal of credit for coordinating with the other. Staff members seem more concerned that the programs be delivered and used. This concern with providing programs and not with receiving credit works to the advantage of the relationship. The problem with such a posture, if there is one, is that there appears to be fairly low levels of community understanding or support for the interagency nature of CE.

Results of Triangulation

As a result of triangulating the findings with the theory, literature, and research base discussed earlier, several implications for programmatic

dimensions occur. These focus on program parameters, processes, and environmental factors (see Figure 1).

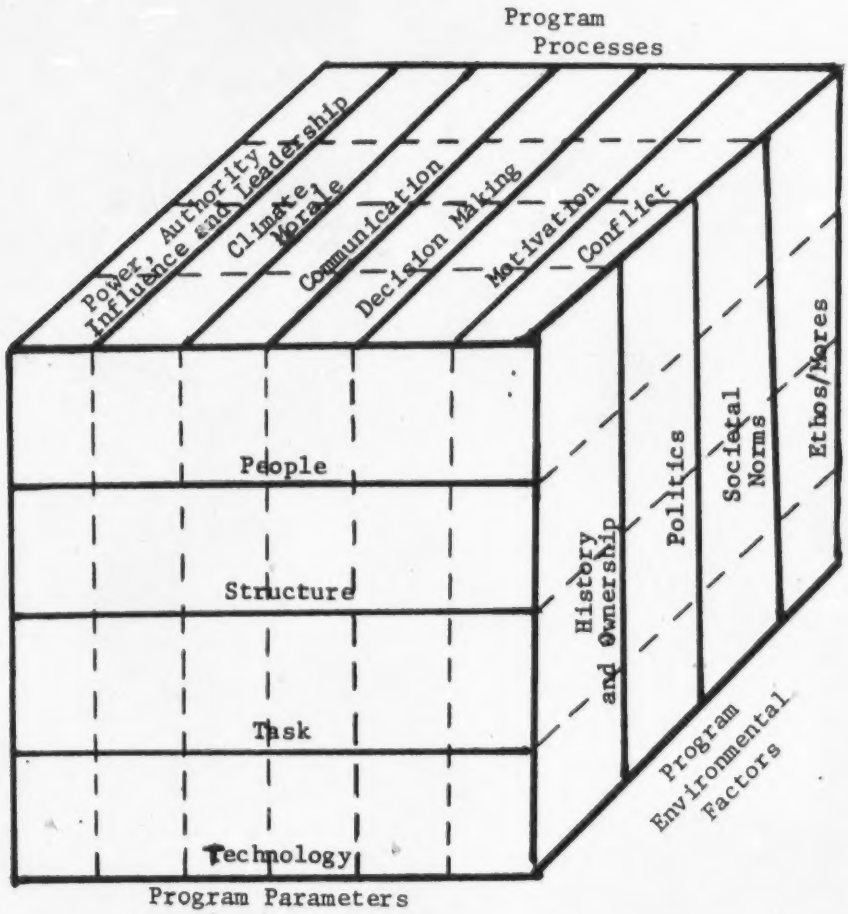

Figure 1. Program parameters, processes, and environmental factors.

Program Parameters. The people involved in Danville's CE program and interagency relationship, their personalities, and the relationships they have formed are clearly major factors in the relationship's continuation. Concerning structure, the two agencies are organized differently. The number of the administrative staff in the Public Schools is larger than that in Parks and Recreation; Parks and Recreation has a flatter hierarchy. There is no indication that these differences in structure have played a role in determining the continuation of the interagency relationship. When the CE director needs to talk with the director of Parks and Recreation about an issue, she may speak first with Tish Lindsey, the assistant director, or she may go directly to Gilstrap, the director, depending on the issue. Likewise, she will call directly the Superintendent of Schools, Truitt, if she sees the need. Because of the personalities and relationships involved and because of their ongoing contact through the Administrative Council, differing administrative structures seem to have no effect on the interagency relationship. The task of the CE program centers on the delivery of educational and recreational services to people in the Danville area and the provision of facilities and resources to help people meet their needs. This broad mission encompasses the purposes of the Public Schools and Parks and Recreation. The goals of the two agencies are similar only in this broadest sense; the goals of CE overlap both agencies. The tasks involved in meeting the interagency/CE goals are similar to tasks performed by the Public Schools--offering classes in public school buildings, hiring teachers to teach the classes, publicizing classes and programs--and are also similar to some tasks of Parks and Recreation--using gym facilities, organizing athletic and recreation programs, and providing space and teachers for hobbies. This similarity of tasks has been useful in maintaining the interagency re-

lationship in that staff of both agencies have an understanding of what CE does, and CE staff are in a position to understand the activities of both agencies. No data were found to suggest that tasks performed by CE or either agency was an inhibiting factor to the interagency relationship. There are differences in some of the technology used by Parks and Recreation staff and the Public School staff. In general, Parks and Recreation staff and administrators place an emphasis on hiring professionally prepared staff, promoting staff development and in-service training, budgeting for conferences and workshops, structuring staff jobs to emphasize a good deal of independence and responsibility, and delegating widely. Staff at the same levels within the Public Schools, teachers and coordinators, do not appear to have the same amount of time and money allocated for staff development and training, conferences and workshops, and in-service training. CE program supervisors have not been as involved in Parks and Recreation staff meetings and general departmental functions as some in the department would like. CE staff follow the Public School personnel guidelines and are viewed as being parallel with teachers as far as staff development and workshops are concerned. These differences, though, have been openly discussed and acknowledged and do not seem to cause problems for the interagency relationship. Each agency has taken a different approach to similar staff positions, and that seems to be related to some differences in technology. For instance, the area of citizen involvement is one which has not been developed to any extent by CE. Discussion with CE staff has indicated that there has been little training or education on methods by which coordinators could involve citizens in program development and implementation. This is in contrast to discussions and observations of staff within Parks and Recreation, where emphasis is placed on citizen participation. Staff of the department seem aware of the benefits and methods for involving

citizens in their programs. Another difference in technology between the two agencies is in the general approach taken toward recreation. CE staff are involved in determining programs to be offered, finding teachers and appropriate places for the programs, and advertising and implementing the program sessions. Parks and Recreation staff also perform these tasks. In addition, there is a philosophy within Parks and Recreation that citizens should be educated as to the importance and the meaning of recreation. Department staff members indicate that they try to structure some programs and information about the programs in a way which broadens citizens' understanding of the role recreation can have in their lives and the ways in which citizens can manage their own recreation activities. Although these differences exist, they do not seem to have any adverse effects on the interagency relationship.

Program Processes. There are certain patterns which exist in the nature of the relationship which may be explained, to some extent, by power, influence, leadership and authority as it exists within and between the two agencies. One ongoing issue over which people on the Administrative Council differ revolves around the question of whether CE program supervisors should be required to have a degree. Parks and Recreation administrators believe strongly that the degree is necessary to insure a professional-level staff; public school administrators do not believe a BA should be required. The CE director says she is somewhere in the middle, but can live easily without the requirement of a BA for her staff. The current policy: BAs are preferred, not required. Concerning the issue of the program supervisors' role vis a vis Parks and Recreation, it was noted that Gilstrap and Lindsey, the Parks and Recreation administrators, would like to see much more interaction among the two agencies' staffs, with more involvement in program and staff development. This is not the orientation desired by the Public School staff. The current

practice is that the program supervisors follow the roles outlined by the Public School staff and by Jackie, the CE coordinator, who supports orientation of the Public Schools.

Differences in perceptions of program supervisor staff roles are also reflected in other ways. Parks and Recreation staff seem to put more emphasis on interagency contact with other professionals in their field than do Public School staff directly involved in the CE program. The pattern observed in instances of basic disagreement between the Public Schools and Parks and Recreation is that the approach preferred by the Public Schools tends to be adopted. Given that the CE programs operate primarily in public school buildings, and that the Public Schools put more money into the CE program than does Parks and Recreation it appears that their influence plays the major role in influencing the interagency relationship. In Danville a difference exists in the climate of the two organizations: professional development, delegation of authority and responsibility, and informality tend to be emphasized more within the Parks and Recreation Department than in the Public Schools. This difference does not seem to influence the interagency relationship, however. Communication patterns within each agency are different in certain respects, too. More formality and administrative levels exist in the larger Public School organization than in the Parks and Recreation Department. However, there was no indication that communication is a problem, either within or between the two agencies. Quite the contrary, staff from each organization speak of the positive and open nature of the communication processes. From all indications, this open and ongoing interchange is quite important in maintaining and enhancing the relationship between the two agencies.

The differences in size and climate do influence the decision-making processes within and between the two agencies, though. The Superintendent of

Schools reports directly to the School Board, which takes budget requests and other information about the schools to the City Council. The Director of Parks and Recreation, on the other hand, reports to the City Manager, not to a Board or the City Council. The Director speaks to City Council members formally and informally from time to time, but his ongoing and close working relationship is with the City Manager. In addition, the Public Schools have a degree and kind of public exposure which is different, more closely scrutinized perhaps, than that of Parks and Recreation. These differences seem to manifest themselves in a more informal, casual decision-making process within Parks and Recreation than within the Public Schools. When decisions must be made regarding CE, they are made in different ways depending on the issue. In general, though, it can be said that the decision-making process between the organizations appear to be open to all concerned; there is no suspicion that decisions are made according to hidden agendas or differing motives behind decisions. This reflects the high level of trust apparent in this interagency relationship. The decision-making process, then, both reflects the strengths of the relationship and helps to sustain it.

In general, those in positions of influence within each agency have strong levels of motivation to maintain the CE program. They believe in the concept and the benefits which the public as well as their respective agencies are gaining. Those persons in decision-making positions within each agency deal with differences and conflict openly and directly, also. There is an ability "to agree to disagree" when no resolution seems possible. The general level of conflict appears to be relatively low; there is broad agreement as to the general purposes, goals, and strategies of the interagency relationship and the CE program. Conflicts which do become apparent seem to occur over basic differences between the agencies. Conflict does not seem to influence the

interagency relationship, except that the effective management of conflict reflects the strength of the relationship and helps to maintain it.

Environmental Factors. History and ownership play a role in shaping the relationship between the two agencies. The history of cooperation, close working relationships, and trust and informality have a definite influence over the continuing interagency relationship. Several staff indicated that they felt a confidence in the other agency, partly because of the other's history of working cooperatively. Some principals were reportedly open to the CE and "open school" concepts because they had seen Parks and Recreation act responsibly and fulfill its end of the agreements over the years. Politics may have been an important factor in the interagency relationship when the schools were being integrated. It is not an influence today, according to those involved, with one exception. It was noted by a City Councilor that the Council likes to see agencies coordinate, avoid duplication of services, and run efficient programs. Thus, coordination is politically advantageous, at least with regard to the ongoing support of major funding sources. Societal norms influence the interorganizational context, too. One City Councilor, for example, believed that the close interagency cooperation exhibited between the Public Schools and Parks and Recreation is no surprise. He views the community as a relatively small, southern one; in his mind, people in such communities "just naturally try to help each other." This norm of cooperation, then, seems to be a factor which has enhanced the interagency relationship. On the other hand, it was noted by more than one person interviewed, that many human service professionals talk of interagency coordination and cooperation, but few engage actively in it. Thus, the norm of cooperation is seen as supportive specifically to the CE relationship, but not a significant factor in other such relationships. Concerning ethos and mores (beliefs and traditions),

no clear relationship is seen in terms of contributing to or detracting from the interagency relationship. The average educational level of Danville's citizens (approximately, 8th grade) might suggest that the community would not place a high value on education. Several staff indicated that many adults hesitate to participate in CE because of their negative association and identification with public schools. For them, going to school was not a pleasant or successful experience during their childhood, and they would rather not reacquaint themselves. As a part of the community ethos which is not supportive of public education, this issue may have detracted from increased participation in CE programs, but it does not appear to have had a negative impact on the nature of the interagency relationship. In fact, it may serve to stimulate the CE staff and Administrative Council towards closer coordination; there are periodic discussions concerning ways of increasing program participation levels. The educational level issue may also have an effect on motivation levels of CE staff, especially staff who work with the program for a period of time and do not perceive substantial changes of improvements in community response to programs.

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